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Active Aero Charter
USA Jet Airlines

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

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To: Docket Management System
US Department of Transportation
Room Plaza 401
400 Seventh Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Docket #: FAA-2002-12461-17

Date: 18 December 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to address our concerns regarding a provision within Docket number FAA-2002-12461 regarding the new proposed Part 60. Under Section 60.7 Sponsor Qualification Requirements (paragraph 3) sponsors will be required to utilize their flight simulator a minimum of 600 hours per calendar year or otherwise face de-certification for 12 months.

While we recognize the need for older, infrequently used (due to low demand) simulators to be phased out of the inspection inventory, we respectfully submit that the arbitrary designation of a minimum 600 hours requirement will be an unfair burden for smaller, single simulator sponsors such as ourselves. We also submit that this creates an unfair competitive advantage for larger simulator training companies. These larger companies will benefit from any small sponsor's de-certification when the smaller sponsor is forced to pay premium costs to the larger company for the necessary simulator time caused by the de-certification.

We can best illustrate this with real-life examples from our company's experience. Our company is a business with less than 300 employees. In the past three years we have spent considerable time, effort and financial resources to purchase a DC-9 Flight Simulator, upgrade, certify and successfully maintain it as a Level B Flight Simulator. Given our size, we utilize our simulator on average 500-600 hours maximum.

We only employ a simulator staff of three, allowing us to train a maximum of 8 hours a day, 5 days a week for a maximum availability of 2,080 hours, no other factors considered. After subtracting our annual maintenance time, quarterly QTG testing, FAA re-certification evaluation and crew availability, our maximum availability is much closer to 1,800 hours. This is a considerable difference from the 24 hours a day 7 days a week example cited in the proposal. It may be applicable to larger simulator operations with a fully staffed 24/7 operation, but for smaller companies the numbers are not comparable.

Had the proposed hours requirement been in place in 2000, our company would not have met the minimum hours due to reduced pilot rosters dictated by the economic recession. Based on your proposal, we would have applied for the twelve-month waiver. Regardless of whether the waiver would have been granted, in 2001 we would've failed to meet the minimum hours again due to reduced pilot rosters dictated by the activities related to 9/11, which greatly hampered flight operations in our industry. Under the proposal, our simulator would then have been de-certified for twelve months. Therefore, in addition to using our regular budget to maintain our de-certified flight simulator the 12 months, we would be financially burdened by paying premium dollars from our current training budget in order to train our pilots at one of the few remaining DC-9 flight simulator facilities.

This assumes that those facilities would even be able to accommodate the additional hours of training we would require to keep our pilots current. Prior to operating our own simulator, they had not been able to accommodate us to fit our schedule and budget. Therefore, if we financially survived the economic events that reduced our pilot staffing, the prohibitive cost of



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maintaining a perfectly good simulator (but unusable under the new requirement ONLY because we don't have enough pilots to meet the arbitrary 600 hour requirement) while simultaneously paying premium costs for the same training at another facility for 12 months would most certainly diminish the amount and quality of training we provide our pilot group.

In 1999, prior to obtaining a simulator, our company's management realized we could provide higher quality, personalized training with more extensive safety and emergency procedures at a controlled cost by operating our own simulator. They based the success of our DC-9 training program on purchasing a flight simulator and successfully meeting all FAA requirements so we could conduct higher quality training for our pilots in a cost efficient manner. We continue to successfully train not only our own pilots but also pilots from other carriers in the Detroit/Willow Run area. We submit that the 600-hour minimum requirement is not an accurate gauge of the importance of a simulator's use for smaller, single simulator sponsors.

We respectfully request that company size or pilot roster sizes be factored into any minimum hour requirement. If a large company with many simulators has a simulator they rarely use, the new requirement may be appropriate for their circumstances. However, if a smaller company of 50-200 pilots and 2-3 simulator technicians doesn't meet the requirement but still uses their lone simulator on a regularly scheduled basis, we believe the good faith the company shows in maintaining the simulator to FAA standards and actively using it should be a primary consideration.

In summary, we respectfully oppose the arbitrary assignment of a 600-hour minimum use standard to all simulator sponsors regardless of their size and staffing. We find that this will unintentionally but most certainly put smaller simulator operators at a tremendous financial disadvantage while diminishing the quality of our pilot training.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request. We welcome any opportunity to further discuss our concerns regarding the proposed 600-hour minimum requirement.

Best regards,

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